

Abstract

Despite existence of safety policies in secondary schools in Kenya, student mortality rates are estimated to be on the rise from 3% to 7% annually. This study therefore, investigated school management practices as a predictor variable in the implementation of safety standards in public secondary schools in Machakos County. The study adopted purposive, stratified and simple random sampling techniques in which a sample size of 11 school heads, 44 teachers and 264 students was drawn from 35 public secondary schools in Machakos County, Kenya. Questionnaire and observation checklist were used to collect data. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive, correlation and regression analysis while, the qualitative data from open-ended questions was analyzed thematically and presented using descriptive statistics. The results revealed that school management practices in the County such as; allocation of adequate funds and system support had a significant influence in coordination of implementation, evaluation and control of safety standards in public secondary schools. However, the findings showed that: the school heads lacked security plans or effective ways of sensitizing students and the staff on safety standards; Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (QASOs) from the Ministry of Education neither visited schools nor facilitated training on disaster management as required. Based on these findings school management should frequently organize seminars for training staff and school workers on disaster management. In addition, there is need for QASOs and school heads to intensify supervision in schools and create awareness on the need for school safety among staff and students.